

CpB
R183c
c-5

Address on the life & character of
Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Ramseur
Cox

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY



From the

ERNEST HAYWOOD LIBRARY

Established in Memory of

John Haywood, Trustee 1789-1827

Edmund Burke Haywood, 1843-46

Ernest Haywood, '80

by

Burke Haywood Bridgers, '03

CpB
R183c
c.5

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL



00036729175

*This book must not
be taken from the
Library building.*

Thomas L Nowell

ADDRESS

ON THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

MAJ. GEN. STEPHEN D. RAMSEUR,

BEFORE THE

LADIES' MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION OF RALEIGH, N. C.,

MAY 10TH, 1891.

BY


HON. WILLIAM R. COX.

RALEIGH:

E. M. UZZELL, STEAM PRINTER AND BINDER.

1891.

— *May* 10 — 1891 —



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



MAJOR GENERAL STEPHEN D. RAMSEUR.

ADDRESS

ON THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

MAJ. GEN. STEPHEN D. RAMSEUR,

BEFORE THE

LADIES' MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION OF RALEIGH, N. C.,

MAY 10TH, 1891.

BY

HON. WILLIAM R. COX.

RALEIGH:

E. M. UZZELL, STEAM PRINTER AND BINDER.

1891.

ADDRESS.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen :

When Xerxes looked upon the countless hosts of Persia he is said to have wept when he reflected that within one hundred years from that time not one of those then in his presence would be living. It is with similar emotions every survivor of the war between the States must be moved when called upon to pass in review and comment upon the heroic deeds and still more heroic sufferings of those who participated in that fierce and unrelenting conflict.

It is now over a quarter of a century since the last hostile gun of the war was fired; the laws are everywhere respected and obeyed; and every citizen, irrespective of section or service, recognizes it as his first duty to march to the defense of his government whenever menaced by foes either from within or without.

To such as may question the policy or propriety of these memorial reunions, and inquire why these gatherings of the people, which may keep alive the estrangements of the past, we commend the remarks of that eloquent New Yorker, Chauncey M. Depew, who, upon a similar occasion forcibly and truthfully declared that "vapid sentimentalists and timid souls deprecate these annual reunions, fearing they may arouse old strife and sectional animosities; but a war in which five hundred thousand men were killed and two millions more wounded, in which States were devastated, and money spent equal to twice England's gigantic debt, has a meaning, a lesson, and results which are to the people of this Republic a liberal education, and the highest chairs of this university belong to you."

The ladies of this association have a just appreciation of the necessity for preserving the truths of history for the future historian, who, with a juster prospective which distance may give,

20001

shall write a history of our common country. They have wisely decided that at each annual reunion an active participant of the war shall be called upon to portray the life and character of some distinguished comrade who in the late war yielded up his life in obedience to the laws of his State and for a cause his conscience told him was right. The necessity for preserving the data thus collected becomes more important from the fact that in every war, whatever may be its original merits, writers will always be found to misrepresent and belittle the vanquished, while with fulsome adulation they sing pæans to and crown with laurels the brow of the victor. Even distinguished participants in such strifes are not slow to yield to importunity the autobiographic memoirs of colossal achievements scarcely recognizable by their friends, the effects of which are misleading. In the late war, and by the chroniclers of that war, we were denounced as rebels and traitors, as if the promoters of such epithets were ignorant of the fact that in our Revolutionary war Hancock, Adams and their compeers were denounced as rebels and traitors, while Washington and Franklin broke their oaths of allegiance to join this despised class. Indeed, the very chimney-sweeps in the streets of London are said to have spoken of our rebellious ancestors as their subjects in America. Therefore, with a conscience void of offense, while we would not and should not forget our hallowed memories of comradeship and of common suffering, we cherish them alone as memories, and seek no willows upon which to hang our harps, no rivers by which to sit down and weep while we sing the songs of the long ago.

Wars have existed from the beginning of time; and, despite the spread of christianity and the growth of enlightenment, will probably continue until time shall be no more. In the war between the States there was but little of malice, of vengefulness and vindictiveness. As to its origin there is little probability of our agreeing so long as it is insisted that the North fought chiefly for the eradication of slavery and the South for its perpetuation. At the formation of this government

SLAVERY

existed in every State. New England, which ultimately became the principal theatre of free-soilism and abolition agitation, was at one time more interested in the slave trade than any other section of our country. It is not mere speculation to declare that had her soil and climate been adapted to the cultivation and production of the chief staples of the South she would have recognized it as a great outrage to have been compelled to relinquish so profitable an institution without her free consent. By prospective enactments our Northern friends gradually abolished slavery, and their slaves were sent South and sold. The money arising from such sales was carried North, invested in manufactories, ships and brick walls. Their section prospered and we rejoice in their prosperity as a part of our common country. In an address delivered by Mr. Evarts before the New England Society he said that the Puritan believed in every man attending to his own business, but he believed every man's business was his own. There is a great deal of truth portrayed in this sportive suggestion. Having profitably escaped from this "great iniquity," their restless intellectuality early prompted them to express their abhorrence of slavery. The great body of American people really cared very little about this institution, or, at least, if they deprecated it they recognized it as a matter of local legislation, for which they were not directly responsible; therefore, the question of its abolition for over half a century made but little headway, and only became a potential element of discord when it was discovered that its agitation would have the effect of securing the ascendancy of one of the great political parties of the country. As slavery only obtained in the minor section its agitation, on sectional grounds, ultimately had the effect of promoting a crisis which enabled the ambitious and aspiring politicians to inflame the passions of their followers until they were prepared to see their country plunged into a war, which the border States, led by Virginia, did all that lay in their power to avert. Recognizing the weakness of this institution,

as well as the fact that they were numerically greatly in the minority, the slave-holding States simply asked to be "let alone." But as it was threatened that they should be surrounded by a cordon of free States until slavery had "stung itself to death," and that this government could not exist "half free and half slave," the purposes of the dominant section became so manifest the Southern States felt that, in justice to themselves, they could no longer remain quiet. The causes for this agitation had their existence in the colonial era, when slavery was universal; and the settlement was postponed on account of the difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory solution. Two irreconcilable theories of

POPULAR GOVERNMENT

were at the outset proposed. The one advocated by Mr. Hamilton contemplated a strong centralized authority, fashioned after that of a limited monarchy; the other, which was proposed by Mr. Jefferson, recognized the people as the source of all power, and insisted that they should be left as free and untrammelled from governmental control as its exigencies might demand. The one contemplated a magnificent central government, with that ostentation and parade that keeps the masses in awe; the other a simple, economic, democratic government, regulated and governed by the people. The followers of these statesmen were known by the party names of Federalists and Republicans. The elder Adams was the first President of the Federalists, and during his administration and with his approval the Alien and Sedition laws were passed, the effect of which was to abridge, if not imperil, the freedom of the press in its criticism upon public officials. This measure, with others of an unpopular nature, so outraged public sentiment as to elect Mr. Jefferson, the apostle of Democracy, to succeed Mr. Adams by an overwhelming majority, and the views he entertained and ably advocated laid the foundation for that great popular approval which maintained his party in power, with but brief intervals of interruption, from that time up to the beginning of the war. The student of history will discover

that the institution of slavery played a minor part in the political agitations of this country so long as our politics related alone to questions of national policy. The first serious difficulty of more than local significance which threatened our institutions arose from the imposition of an excise tax on distilled spirits, known as the "Whisky Rebellion." The second, from the hostility of the New England States to the war of 1812, which seriously interfered with their commercial traffic. So great was this discontent that a convention was called to meet at Hartford, Conn., which had in view the secession of the States represented from the Union. In 1820 was passed what is known as the Missouri Compromise, which in effect was simply a truce between two antagonistic revenue systems, while the nullification movement was directed against the tariff system. So that up to this time the chief complaint against any legislation of our country arose from dissatisfaction to its economic system.

Prior to the war the North had devoted herself chiefly to trade and manufacturing, to mechanic arts and industrial pursuits, while the South, owing to its easier lines of life, the fertility of its soil, with its genial climate and "peculiar institution," had turned her attention to the science of politics and a consideration of governmental affairs, the consequence of which was that the controlling voice and influence in the councils of the nation rested with her. As the North, by its industry and enterprise, grew in wealth and the development of a more liberal education, she became impatient and restless under this control, and resolved at all hazards to escape from it. Free-soilism and abolitionism, which up to this time had been the obedient hand-maid to any party that would lend its co-operation, were believed to be the potential elements by which to arouse the apprehensions of the South as to the security of slavery and thus tend to the arrangement of parties on sectional lines. From this time forward the leading statesmen of the South were denounced and vilified as aristocrats and slave-drivers; and on the recurrence of every national contest this new party resorted to every device to create animosities between the sections. At this time the

Democratic party was so strong it became factional, and was finally disrupted through the political jealousy of its leaders. In consequence of their division in the ensuing election four presidential candidates were offered for the suffrage of the people, and Mr. Lincoln was elected. As it was the first time in the history of our country that a President had been elected by a purely sectional vote, and a large portion of his followers were believed to be intent on either the abolition of slavery or a disruption of the Union, the gravest apprehensions were felt. The situation at that time is so lucidly and graphically described in the memoir of Richard H. Dana, recently prepared by Mr. Adams, Minister to England under Mr. Lincoln's administration, I cannot better present the matter than by using his language: "Looking back on it now, after the lapse of nearly thirty years, it is curious to see how earnestly all played their parts and how essential to the great catastrophe all those parts were. The extremists on both sides were urging the country to immediate blows, regardless of consequences, and by so doing they were educating it to the necessary point when the hour should come. Had the Southern extremists prevailed, and the Southern blood been fired by an assault on Fort Sumter in January, the slave States would probably have been swept into a general insurrection while Buchanan was still President, with Floyd as his Secretary of War. Had this occurred it is difficult now to see how the government could have been preserved. The Southern extremists, therefore, when they urged immediate action were, from the Southern point of view, clearly right. Every day then lost was a mistake, and, as the result proved, an irreparable mistake. On the other hand, had the extremists of the North prevailed in their demand for immediate action they would in the most effective way possible have played the game of their opponents. Fortunately they did not prevail, but their exhortations to action and denunciations of every attempt at a compromise educated the country to a fighting point."

That large and respectable body of patriotic citizens who were wedded to the Union and dreaded war, and above all

things a civil war, were in favor of any compromise which might result in preserving harmony between the sections. It is difficult at this time to appreciate the excitement of those stormy days. Moderation and silence was but little understood or appreciated. The firing upon Sumter fired the hearts of both sections, and followed, as it was, by a call of Mr. Lincoln for troops to make war upon the States, promptly welded the States of the South into one common bond. They felt that if they must fight they preferred to fight the stranger rather than their neighbors who were contending for the maintenance of their own rights, and that to yield to the party in power at such a juncture was but to invite further aggressions on their rights, and that this would involve their subjugation with the overthrow of their most cherished institutions. That no permanent compromise was practicable, and that war at some time was inevitable must now be clear to all; that the war has taken place; that the abolition of slavery has occurred; that the South has been thrown open to settlement, to free and unembarrassed communication to the outside world; that the greatness of our section and the capabilities of our people to maintain our free institutions has been manifested, and that the war has proved a great educator to all, is now conceded. In turning over the government to our Northern friends the much misrepresented people of the South can point with pride to the fact that the declaration that "these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free," was penned by a Southern statesman; that this declaration was made good under the leadership of a Southern general; that "the father of the Constitution" was a Southern man; that through a President, a Southern man, our boundaries were extended from ocean to ocean and from the Gulf to the lakes; and that prior to the late war all assaults against the integrity of the Union were compromised and accommodated mainly through Southern statesmanship. When, after fifty years of its existence, the government was turned over to the statesmen of the North, in the language of one of her gifted and eloquent sons, the South surrendered it to her successors "match-

less in her power, incalculable in her strength, the power and the glory of the world.”

It is of

STEPHEN D. RAMSEUR

that we now propose to speak—his life, his services and his lamented death. In the Piedmont section of our State there is one county named in honor of that Revolutionary hero, Benjamin Lincoln, who at the time was in command of the Continental soldiers in Charleston harbor, fighting for the freedom and independence of the American colonies. This county was originally a part of Mecklenburg, the “Hornets’ Nest” of the Revolution, and her sons partook of the sturdy patriotism of their neighbors. In her territorial limits was fought the battle of Ramseur’s Mill and other stirring scenes of like nature. Lincoln, though one of the smallest counties in the State, gave to history such well-known Revolutionary names as Brevard, Dickson, Chronicle and others, which, though less generally known, were no less patriotic and determined in upholding their principles. The county-seat of Lincoln, with that want of imagination and originality for which Americans are celebrated, is called Lincolnton, a small village long distinguished for the culture, refinement and unobtrusive hospitality of its people. While her citizens were not wealthy they enjoyed such affluence as enabled them to be independent and self-reliant. About the year 1837 there was born in Lincoln county three children, each of whom became distinguished in war before attaining his twenty-seventh year, and also from among her accomplished daughters came the wives of Stonewall Jackson, Lieutenant General D. H. Hill and Brigadier General Rufus Barringer. Ramseur, Hoke and R. D. Johnson were born within a year of each other, and for distinguished services in the field were promoted and entitled to wear the coveted general’s wreath on their collars. This same county gave to Alabama Brigadier General John H. Forney, a gallant soldier, who is now, and for years has been, one of her most faithful and trusted members in the national Congress. Born and reared amidst

such favorable and stimulating surroundings, it is not a matter of surprise that these young men should have been prompted by an honorable emulation to secure those prizes that were justly their own, for "*blood will tell.*" Entirely free from the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war," ever kind and accessible to those about him, skillful and able in the field, Major General Hoke readily became the idol of his soldiers. While not attaining to so high a rank, Brigadier General Johnson was an able and fearless soldier. The life of Ramseur, while briefer, was not less brilliant and attractive than that of any of his contemporaries. It has been eloquently said by another: "A book of dates, a table of dynasties, a succession of kings, or popes, or presidents—these in one aspect are history; but if they are to attract, or impress, or enduringly influence us, behind these dry bones of the historian's cabinet there must glow and palpitate the living lineaments of a man."

But should we choose an element of pre-eminent power to interest mankind, that element must consist of the life and deeds of some prominent actor upon the great theatre of war. While many admire, enjoy and are improved by the triumphs of the imagination and the reason the impulse and the heart of the multitude in every age and clime have been taken captive by the great actors rather than by the great thinkers among men. This has been true from the time of Joshua until that of Mahomet, and from thence to the present time, and we must conclude that the multitude is right. Even the eloquence of Demosthenes, the oratory of Cicero, the glowing periods of Longinus, the beauties of Gibbon, the orphic rhythm of Milton, the profound reasoning of Bacon and the marvelous creations of Shakespeare, all have their enthusiastic admirers, but the heart of the multitude goes out in profound admiration for the courage, the genius and marvelous achievements of the great conquerors of the world. It attends them not only in their triumphs, but accompanies them with its sympathy in disappointments and misfortunes. So many elements are combined to constitute the truly great commander I will not endeavor to enumerate them, but will content myself by saying

that the popular sentiment that the ideal general displays his greatest power upon the battle field is an error, of which the late Von Moltke is a notable example. His greatest achievements consist in so preparing and mobilizing his forces as to virtually secure his success before encountering his adversary. Our Revolutionary period supplies us with an example of one of those matchless leaders, who, while he lost the majority of the great battles in which he was engaged, yet, even amidst the hardships and sufferings of a "Valley Forge," by his forethought, his patience and unselfish patriotism could win and retain the confidence and admiration of his troops until he led them to the achievement of results which won the admiration of mankind. And our late war gave us the example of one who in all respects was a fitting complement of the former. Peerless in victory and in adversity, he was matchless. Among the many able general officers which the exigencies of the late war called to the front, Ramseur is entitled to rank high, and gave the most flattering promises of still greater achievements.

Stephen D. Ramseur, the second child of Jacob A. and Lucy M. Ramsenr, had Revolutionary blood in his veins through John Wilfong, a hero who was wounded at King's Mountain and fought at Eutaw Springs. He was born in Lincolnnton the 31st day of May, 1837. His surroundings were well calculated to promote a well developed character and a strong self-relying manhood. His parents were members of the Presbyterian Church, and did not neglect to see their son properly instructed in their religious tenets. They were possessed of ample means for their section, and gave to him the best advantages of social and intellectual improvement without being exposed to the "devices and snares of the outer world." To the strong and beautiful character of his mother, Ramsenr is said to have been indebted for the greater part of his success in life. In preparing the life of Dr. Thornwell, Rev. Dr. Palmer has asserted a truth which may be classed as a proverb: "The pages of history will be searched in vain for a great man who had a fool for his mother." In writing of her the Hon. David

Schenck, who married Sallie Wilfong, her second daughter, says: "As a young lady she was said to have been beautiful and attractive. I knew her intimately from 1849 to her death. She was a woman of great force of character. To a judgment clear and firm she united gentleness, tenderness and sympathy. Her manners were easy and courteous and fascinating. She was an active and devoted member of the Presbyterian Church, and brought up her children in the teachings of the shorter catechism from their early youth. It was to her that General Ramseur owed the mental and moral foundations of his character." He received his preparatory training in the schools of Lincolnton and in the village of Milton, then he matriculated at Davidson College, entered the Freshman class and passed eighteen months at this institution. He early displayed that decision of character and force of will that distinguished him in after life. He had an ardent longing for a military career, and though disappointed in his efforts to secure an appointment as a cadet at the United States Military Academy, he was not cast down. Through the aid of General D. H. Hill, then a professor at Davidson, his second application was successful. He was given his appointment to the Academy by that sturdy old Roman, the Hon. Burton Craige, who before the days of rotation in office was long an able and distinguished member of Congress from our State. Ramseur spent the usual term of five years at the Academy and was graduated with distinction in the class of 1860. Among his class-mates of national reputation were Generals James H. Wilson and Merritt, Colonel Wilson, Commandant at United States Military Academy, and Colonel A. C. M. Pennington, U. S. A.

Through his courtesy, sincerity and the conscientious discharge of his duties while at West Point he formed many valued friendships both among his fellow-students and in the corps. After graduating, Ramseur entered the light artillery service and was commissioned Second Lieutenant by brevet. He was in the United States army but a short time prior to the breaking out of hostilities, and during that time was assigned to

duty at Fortress Monroe. In April, 1861, he resigned his commission in the old army and promptly tendered his sword to the Provisional Government of the Confederate States, then assembled at Montgomery. By this government he was commissioned First Lieutenant of Artillery and ordered to the department of Mississippi. About this time a battery of artillery was being formed at Raleigh, whose membership was comprised of the flower of the patriotic youth of the State. It was called "the Ellis Artillery," in honor of our then very able and patriotic Governor, whose early death by *phthisis* was an irreparable loss to our State in the early days of the war. The officers were Manly, Saunders, Guion and Bridgers, who, owing to our long peace establishment, were not familiar with even the rudiments of the drill. Therefore, with more patriotism than selfish emulation, they promptly applied through Lieutenant Saunders to their friend the Governor for some suitable and reliable commander. With a pardonable pride in so fine a company, Governor Ellis had doubtless previously considered this subject in his own mind. At all events, so soon as the request was made known he promptly replied: "I have the very man. You couldn't get a better. It is Lieutenant Ramseur." Thereupon a dispatch was sent tendering him the command, which reached him on his way to his new field of duty. He accepted the unsolicited but none the less coveted distinction of repelling the invasion of his native State in command of her own sons, and repaired at once to Raleigh. On arriving at the camp of instruction near this place he found a first-class command of raw recruits without equipments or discipline or the remotest conception of the magnitude of the great contest before them. Many had joined the artillery because it was known to be one of the higher and more attractive branches of the service. They concurred with Secretary Seward, that the war was a matter of a few months, or else with Vice-President Stephens, that for the defense of their firesides gentlemen should not be kept in camps of instruction and discipline, but permitted to remain at their homes, for they were capable of judging when the enemy

should be met, and by what methods most easily defeated. If they had read of war it was, in books which gave it such gloss and glamour as made every battle magnificent, if not positively delectable, for such, indeed, is the general current of popular history. Not so Ramseur, who had been taught in the school where the art of war is thoroughly explained, the discipline and drudgery of soldier life daily seen and the distinctions and advantages of rank recognized and respected. His education and experience led him to concur with Viscount Woolsey, who, in speaking of war, declares that active service teaches us some painful lessons: "That all men are not heroes; that the quality as well as quantity of their courage differs largely; that some men are positively cowards; that there always is, always has been, and always will be, a good deal of skulking and malingering; it teaches us not to expect too much from any body of men; above all things to value the truly brave men as worth more than all the talkers and spouters who have ever squabbled for place in the arena of politics." Ramseur was well satisfied with the *esprit de corps* of his command, and resolved to employ it to the best advantage. To do this his men must have a knowledge of tactics, discipline, and subordination was indispensable. He had considered all this, determined what was right, and whether it consorted with the wishes and inclinations of those who belonged to the command or not was not material with him. Indeed, duty was his polar star. He did not willingly sever his connection from the old army, but when called on to elect whether he would fight for or against his people and his State there was no hesitancy, no doubt as to where his duty lay, and he threw his whole soul and energies into the cause of the South. This company was composed of twelve months men. Ramseur wanted soldiers, and wanted them for the war. This being known, some, a few members of the company, began to become discontented. They feared they were to be treated as regular soldiers, and insisted that inasmuch as they had volunteered only for twelve months that should the company be reorganized for the war they were entitled to withdraw. They were good men

and did not desire to leave the service: they were allowed to withdraw, and in other fields made valient soldiers. The reorganization of the battery was soon completed, all elements of discord eliminated, and, under the skillful management and discipline of its new Captain, made admirable progress. The great thing now was to secure its guns and equipments, and in this the company was aided by its name and the patriotic ardor of the citizens of Raleigh. At this time there was only one field battery available, and for it another company was applying. The name and *personnel* of the Ellis Artillery won the prize, while the voluntary subscriptions of our citizens supplied it with horses. Being without tents or suitable parade grounds, Mr. William Boylan tendered it his residence and out-buildings for shelter and ample grounds as a camp for instruction. The offer was accepted, and here the company received that impress which, when called to Virginia and brought in comparison with others, carried off the palm for their soldierly bearing, their splendid drill and handsome equipment. In the latter part of the summer of 1861 the company was ordered to Smithfield, Va., where the fall and winter months were spent without graver duties than occasional reconnoissances to and from Norfolk. McClellan's army was now near Washington, confronted by that of General Joe Johnston, while the public mind of the North was becoming very impatient at its inaction, and began to renew the cry of "On to Richmond!" which had been so popular before the inglorious defeat of the Federal army at Manassas. McClellan, unable to resist this clamor, determined to endeavor to reach the Confederate capital by way of the lower Chesapeake, and on transports transferred his army to the Peninsular and sat down before Yorktown. It is estimated that McClellan at this time had an army of not less than one hundred and twenty thousand men fit for duty. This force was to be confronted and delayed until Johnston could arrive by thirteen thousand Confederates under J. B. Magruder, who, in order to accomplish this purpose, was compelled to cover a front of thirteen miles with his small force. The work was done, and with consummate ability, and it is no

disparagement to others to say there was no officer in either army better qualified to play such a game of bluff than the genial, whole-souled Magruder. Ramseur was ordered to report with his battery at Yorktown. When he arrived Magruder, who had known him in the old army, detached him from his battery and placed him in command of all the artillery on his right. Here Ramseur saw his first active service in the field, and received the promotion of Major. On the arrival of the forces of McClellan a campaign of maneuvering commenced which delayed advance for over a month. In the meantime Ramseur had been elected Lieutenant Colonel of the Third Regiment of Volunteers, but declined to leave his battery. Subsequently, and before serious demonstrations had begun, he was elected Colonel of the Forty-ninth Regiment of Infantry. He was still reluctant to leave his battery, but appreciating the fact that Manly and its other officers were then well qualified for any duties that might be required of them, through the persuasion of friends he was induced to accept the promotion. Subsequent events soon justified his confidence in this artillery company. At the battle of Williamsburg, where it received its first baptism of fire, it gathered fadeless laurels which it was destined to wear throughout the war with a fame still augmenting.

The Forty-ninth Regiment was composed of raw recruits who were gathered together in the camp of instruction at Raleigh, organized into companies and regiments and instructed as to its duties in the field. With his accustomed energy and ability Ramseur immediately addressed himself to the labor of making soldiers out of these new recruits. By constant drill he soon had his regiment in fair condition; and, as the emergency was pressing, he moved with it to the point of danger. The regiment was assigned to the brigade of an old army officer, General Robert Ransom, who was soon to become a distinguished Major General of cavalry in the Army of Northern Virginia and thence to be assigned to the command of all the cavalry under Longstreet in his operations in the West. In the series of battles around Richmond, known as the "Seven Days' Fight,"

Ramseur, while gallantly leading his regiment in the battle of Malvern Hill, received a severe and disabling wound through the right arm, but declined to leave the field until the action was over. This wound necessitated his removal to Richmond, where he was detained for over a month before his injury permitted him to enjoy the much-coveted pleasure of a visit to his home. Indeed, the arm was broken, and he was ever afterwards compelled to wear it in a sling.

In his report General Ransom speaks of the conspicuous gallantry of Ramseur and his men, and it was by reason of his soldierly qualities mainly, displayed upon this occasion, that his promotion to the rank of

BRIGADIER GENERAL

soon followed. While still at home wounded Ramseur received notice of his unexpected promotion. At first he doubted whether one so young should accept so responsible a position, and was disposed to decline the promotion. His friends did not coincide in his views, and through their persuasion he was induced to accept it. In October, 1862, with his arm still disabled, he went to Richmond to make a decision in regard to the brigade offered him. While there he called upon Mr. Davis, alike distinguished as a soldier and a statesman, to whom he expressed the fears then agitating his mind. In that affable and engaging manner peculiar to himself, Mr. Davis at once dismissed any suggestion of his declining, and on the contrary urged him to accept the command, return home and remain until he had entirely recovered his health and his strength. But Ramseur obeyed only in part the suggestions of his Commander-in-chief. He accepted the command of the brigade and went at once to the Army of Northern Virginia, and, with his wound still green, entered upon the discharge of his duties. This brigade was then composed of the Second Regiment, organized and instructed by that able tactician, scholarly and accomplished gentleman, Colonel C. C. Tew, who was killed at Sharpsburg; the Fourth by the chivalrous and lamented Brigadier General George B. Anderson,

who died of wounds received at Sharpsburg; the Fourteenth, before its reorganization, was commanded and instructed by that soldierly and ardent North Carolinian, Brigadier General Junius Daniel, who fell in the Spottsylvania campaign ere his commission as a Major General had reached him; and the Thirtieth by Colonel F. M. Parker, the brave soldier and courteous gentleman, of whom further mention will be made during the course of this narrative. Ramseur, "like apples of gold in pictures of silver," was aptly and fitly chosen the worthy commander of this distinguished brigade, and immediately addressed himself to its reorganization. His admirable qualifications for his duties and his pure and chivalrous character were soon recognized and appreciated and infused new life and spirit into the command. As a disciplinarian he was rigid; as a tactician, skillful; as a judge of men, good; as a redressor of wrongs, prompt; as an officer, courteous and urbane; as a soldier, fearless and chivalrous. He early commanded the respect and ultimately won the hearts of all over whom he held command. This brigade at the time he assumed command was in Rodes' Division of Jackson's Corps. Ramseur remained in command without events of any particular importance occurring until he entered upon his

CHANCELLORSVILLE CAMPAIGN.

His report of that famous battle is so full and complete, and so clearly displays the unselfish and chivalrous nature of this officer, I am confident I cannot do better than to incorporate it as a part of this sketch. It reads as follows:

"MAY 23, 1864.

"SIR:—In obedience to Orders No. —, dated May 7th, 1863, I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of my brigade in the series of skirmishes and battles opening at Massaponax Creek and ending in the splendid victory at Chancellorsville:

"Wednesday A. M., April 29th, the brigade was placed below Massaponax Creek to dispute the enemy's crossing, and remained

in that position, occasionally annoyed by their artillery (by which I lost a few men) and kept on the alert by picket firing until Thursday evening, when we were withdrawn to a point near Hamilton's Crossing.

"Friday, May 1st, at 3 A. M., we were aroused for the march and led the advance of Major General Rodes' Division in the direction of Chancellorsville. At a distance of seven miles from Fredericksburg we were detached from our own division and ordered to report to Major General Anderson, when we advanced upon the enemy, who fell back in confusion before our sharpshooters for several miles, strewing the way with their arms and baggage, this brigade, with General Posey on our right and General Wright on our left, for upwards perhaps of two miles, being in advance. About 6 P. M. we found the foe in force upon our front and supported by batteries that poured grape unsparingly into the woods through which we were still advancing. Night approaching a halt was ordered, and we slept on our arms with a strong picket line on the outposts.

"Saturday, May 2d, we were relieved about sunrise and shortly thereafter marched by a series of circuitous routes and with surpassing strategy to a position in the rear of the enemy, whom at about 5 P. M. we were ordered to attack.

"This brigade was directed to support Brigadier General Colquitt, with orders to overlap his right by one regiment, and was placed accordingly. At the command we advanced with the division, preserving a distance of about one hundred yards in the rear of General Colquitt. Brisk firing was soon heard upon our front and left, indicating that General Doles had encountered the foe. At this point General Colquitt moved by the right flank, sending me word by an officer of his staff that the enemy was attempting to turn his right. I immediately moved by the right flank, but heard no firing in that quarter. Again he sent his staff officer to inform me that the enemy was passing by his right flank, when I directed him to say to General Colquitt (in effect) that the firing indicated a sharp fight with General Doles, and that my impression was that his support was needed there,

and that I would take care of his right flank. General Colquitt moved to the front, with the exception of one regiment, which continued to the right. I then pressed on by the right flank to meet the enemy that General Colquitt's staff officer twice reported to me to be in that direction, and prosecuted the search for half a mile perhaps, but not a solitary Yankee was to be seen. I then came up to the division line and moved by the left flank to the support of General Colquitt, whose men were resting in line of battle on the field General Doles had won.

"Saturday night our division occupied the last line of battle within the intrenchments from which the routed corps of Sigel had fled in terror. My brigade was placed perpendicular to the plank-road, the left resting on the road, General Doles on my right and Colonel (E. A.) O'Neal, commanding Rodes' Brigade, on my left. I placed Colonel (F. M.) Parker, Thirtieth North Carolina, on the right of my brigade; Colonel (R. T.) Bennett, Fourteenth North Carolina, on right centre; Colonel (W. R.) Cox, Second North Carolina, left centre, and Colonel (Bryan) Grimes, Fourth North Carolina, on left.

"Sunday, May 3d, the division, being as stated, in the third line of battle, advanced about 9 o'clock to the support of the second line. After proceeding about one-fourth of a mile I was applied to by Major (W. J.) Pegram for support to his battery, when I detached Colonel Parker, Thirtieth North Carolina, for this purpose, with orders to advance obliquely to his front and left and join me after his support should be no longer needed, or to fight his regiment as circumstances might require. I continued to advance to the first line of breastworks, from which the enemy had been driven, and behind which I found a small portion of Paxton's Brigade and Jones' Brigade, of Trimble's Division. Knowing that a general advance had been ordered, I told these troops to move forward. Not a man moved. I then reported this state of things to Major General Stuart, who directed me to assume command of these troops and compel them to advance. This I essayed to do, and, after fruitless efforts, ascertained that General Jones was not on the field and that Colonel (T. S.) Garnett had been killed,

I reported again to General Stuart, who was near, and requested permission to run over the troops in my front, which was cheerfully granted. At the command "Forward!" my brigade, with a shout, cleared the breastworks and charged the enemy. The Fourth North Carolina (Colonel Grimes) and seven companies of the Second North Carolina (Colonel Cox) drove the enemy before them until they had taken the last line of his works, which they held under a severe, direct and enfilading fire, repulsing several assaults on this portion of our front. The Fourteenth North Carolina (Colonel Bennett) and three companies of the Second were compelled to halt some one hundred and fifty or two hundred yards in rear of the troops just mentioned for the reason that the troops on my right had failed to come up and the enemy was in heavy force on my right flank. Had Colonel Bennett advanced the enemy could easily have turned my right. As it was, my line was subjected to a horrible enfilading fire, by which I lost severely. I saw the danger threatening my right, and sent several times to Jones' Brigade to come to my assistance, and I also went back twice myself and exhorted and ordered it (officers and men) to fill up the gap (some five or six hundred yards) on my right, but all in vain. I then reported to General Rodes that unless support was sent to drive the enemy from my right I would have to fall back. In the meantime Colonel Parker of the Thirtieth North Carolina, approaching from the battery on the right, suddenly fell upon the flank and repulsed a heavy column of the enemy who were moving to get in my rear by my right flank, some three or four hundred of them surrendering to him as prisoners of war. The enemy still held his strong position in the ravine on my right, so that the Fourteenth North Carolina and the three companies of the Second North Carolina could not advance. The enemy discovered this situation of affairs and pushed a brigade to the right and rear of Colonel Grimes and seven companies of Colonel Cox's (Second North Carolina), with the intention of capturing their commands. This advance was made under a terrible direct fire of musketry and artillery. The move necessitated a retrograde

movement on the part of Colonels Grimes and Cox, which was executed in order, but with the loss of some prisoners, who did not hear the command to retire. Colonel Bennett held his position until ordered to fall back, and, in common with all the others, to replenish his empty cartridge-boxes. The enemy did not halt at this position, but retired to his battery, from which he was quickly driven, Colonel Parker of the Thirtieth North Carolina sweeping over it with the troops on my right.

"After replenishing cartridge-boxes I received an order from Major General Rodes to throw my brigade on the left of the road to meet an apprehended attack of the enemy in that quarter. This was done, and afterwards I was moved to a position on the plank-road which was intrenched, and which we occupied until the division was ordered back to camp near Hamilton's Crossing.

"The charge of the brigade, made at a critical moment, when the enemy had broken and was hotly pressing the centre of the line in our front with apparently overwhelming numbers, not only checked his advance but threw him back in disorder and pushed him with heavy loss from his last line of works.

"Too high praise cannot be accredited to officers and men for their gallantry, fortitude and manly courage during this brief but arduous campaign. Exposed as they had been for five days immediately preceding the fights on the picket line, they were, of course, somewhat wearied, but the order to move forward and confront the enemy brightened every eye and quickened every step. Under fire all through Wednesday, Wednesday night and Thursday, without being able effectually to return this fire, they bore all bravely, and led the march towards Chancellorsville on Friday morning in splendid order. The advance of the brigade on Friday afternoon was made under the very eyes of our departed hero (Jackson) and of Major General A. P. Hill, whose words of praise and commendation, bestowed upon the field, we fondly cherish. And on Sunday the magnificent charge of the brigade upon the enemy's last and most terrible stronghold was made in view of Major General Stuart and our division com-

mander, Major General R. E. Rodes, whose testimony that it was the most glorious charge of that most glorious day, we are proud to remember and report to our kindred and friends.

"To enumerate all the officers and men who deserve special mention for their gallantry would be to return a list of all who were on the field. All met the enemy with unflinching courage; and for privations, hardships, and splendid marches, all of which were cheerfully borne, they richly deserve the thanks of our beautiful and glorious Confederacy.

"I cannot close without mentioning the conspicuous gallantry and great efficiency of my regimental commander. Colonel Parker of the Thirtieth North Carolina was detached during the fight of Sunday to support a battery, and having accomplished that object moved forward on his own responsibility and greatly contributed to wrest the enemy's stronghold at Chancellorsville from their grasp as well as prevent their threatened demonstrations upon the right of my brigade; the gallant Grimes of the Fourth North Carolina, whose conduct on other fields gave promise of what was fully realized on this; Colonel Bennett of the Fourteenth North Carolina, conspicuous for his coolness under the hottest fire, and last, though not least, the manly and chivalrous Cox of the Second North Carolina, the accomplished gentleman, splendid soldier, and warm friend, who, though wounded five times, remained with his regiment until exhausted. In common with the entire command, I regret his temporary absence from the field, where he loved to be.

"Major Daniel W. Hurtt, Second North Carolina State Troops, commanded the skirmishers faithfully and well.

"To the field and company officers, one and all, my thanks are due for the zeal and bravery displayed under the most trying circumstances.

"To the gentlemen of my staff I owe especial thanks for services rendered on the march and upon the field. Captain Seaton Gales, Assistant Adjutant General, and Lieutenant Caleb Richmond, Aide-de-camp, were with me all the time, promptly carrying orders under the very hottest fire. I take pleasure, too,

in speaking of the bravery of private James Stinson, courier, a youth of twenty, who displayed qualities a veteran might boast of, and of the conduct of private J. B. Beggarly, also a courier to headquarters.

"To Dr. G. W. Briggs, Senior Surgeon of the brigade, my thanks are due for his zeal, skill, and care of the wounded.

"I am, sir, very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"STEPHEN D. RAMSEUR,

"Brigadier General Commanding."

In the report of this battle by Major General Rodes he makes the following remarks as to the part borne by Ramseur's Brigade:

* * * * *

"While these movements were taking place on the left, Ramseur and Doles pushed forward on the right, passed the first line of intrenchments, which had already been carried, passed the first and second lines of our troops, and became fiercely engaged. Doles deflecting to the right, passed up a ravine behind the graveyard on Chancellor's Hill, and finally came out in the field nearly opposite the house, driving the enemy before him as he advanced, actually getting several hundred yards to the rear as well of those troops opposing the rest of my division as of those opposing General Anderson's Division. Subsequently he was compelled to fall back and was directed by General Lee to take a large body of prisoners. Ramseur, after vainly urging the troops in the first line of intrenchment to move forward, obtained permission to pass them, and, dashing over the works, charged the second intrenchment in the most brilliant style. The struggle at this point was long and obstinate, but the charge on the left of the plank-road at this time caused the enemy to give way on his left, and this, combined with the unflinching determination of his men, carried the day and gave him possession of the works. Not being supported, he was exposed still to a galling fire from the right, with great danger of being flanked. Not-

withstanding repeated efforts made by him, and by myself in person, none of the troops in his rear would move up until the old "Stonewall Brigade" arrived on the ground and gallantly advanced in conjunction with the Thirtieth North Carolina Regiment, Colonel F. M. Parker, of Ramseur's Brigade, which had been detached to support a battery, and was now on its return. Occupying the works on the right of Ramseur, and thus relieving him when his ammunition was nearly exhausted, the Stonewall Brigade pushed on and carried Chancellorsville heights, making the third time that they were captured."

In this battle Ramseur, though severely wounded, declined to leave the field, and is especially mentioned by Rodes as one who was "distinguished for great gallantry and efficiency in this action."

It will be remembered that it was here that that great ideal soldier of the Army of Northern Virginia, who stood second only to Lee, Stonewall Jackson, fell mortally wounded, and was carried from the field. His command then devolved on A. P. Hill, who was wounded, and then upon General J. E. B. Stuart, whose plume, like that of Harry of Navarre, was always seen conspicuous in the thickest of the affray. While each of these Generals mentioned Ramseur and his brigade in the most flattering terms, I will not stop to quote from their reports. I prefer to hasten on and call your attention to what will be recognized by every soldier of that army as one of the highest compliments and most distinguished tributes that could have been paid to Ramseur and his command. I beg you to pause and reflect upon the force and power of each expression. It emanates from one not given to compliments, but who, in all of his public communications, seemed to weigh and carefully consider each word that he used. I am confident that the existence of this letter was not known either to Ramseur or to any of his command when written, and came to my notice for the first time only very recently.

GENERAL LEE'S TRIBUTE.

It reads as follows:

“HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,

“June 4th, 1863.

“HIS EXCELLENCY ZEBULON B. VANCE,

“*Governor of North Carolina, Raleigh:*

“GOVERNOR:—I have the honor to call the attention of your Excellency to the reduced condition of Brigadier General Ramseur's Brigade. Its ranks have been much thinned by the casualties of the battles in which it has been engaged, in all of which it has rendered conspicuous service. I consider its brigade and regimental commanders as among the best of their respective grades in the army, and in the battle of Chancellorsville, where the brigade was much distinguished and suffered severely, General Ramseur was among those whose conduct was especially commended to my notice by Lieutenant General Jackson in a message sent to me after he was wounded. I am very desirous that the efficiency of this brigade should be increased by filling its ranks, and respectfully ask that, if it be in your power, you will send on recruits for its various regiments as soon as possible. If this cannot be done I would recommend that two additional regiments be sent to it if they can be had. I am satisfied that the men could be used in no better way to render valuable service to the country and win credit for themselves and their State.

“I am, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) “R. E. LEE,

“*General.*”

Mark the language: “I consider its brigade and regimental commanders the best of their respective grades in the army.” What army? The Army of Northern Virginia! The best on the continent! Who sends a message to Lee about Ramseur that is worthy to be repeated to the Governor of the State? Stonewall Jackson, from his bed of anguish. No higher eulogy could be pronounced.

After the battle of Chancellorsville, Ramseur, with his brigade, accompanied the army of Lee in its invasion of Pennsylvania. In connection with Rodes' Division, in the first day's fight at Gettysburg they secured the elevated ridge known as Oak Hill, which was the key-note of the entire field. Swinton, in his "Army of the Potomac," says: "When towards three o'clock a general advance was made by the Confederates, Rodes speedily broke through the Union centre, carrying away the right of the First Corps and the left of the Eleventh, and, entering the interval between them, disrupted the whole line." The Federal troops fell back in much disorder, and were pursued by our troops through the town of Gettysburg. This was our opportunity to have seized the heights, the subsequent assaults on which proved so disastrous to us during the progress of this battle. Ramseur urged that the pursuit should be continued until Cemetery Heights were in our possession. The light of subsequent events shows that he was clearly in the right. Our friends in Virginia are fond of boasting of the advanced position of their troops at Gettysburg. It is a thing to be boasted of. Her sons were gallant and martial, and far be it from me to detract one tittle from the fame to which they are entitled, yet it is but an act of justice to call attention to the fact that the only two brigades which entered the works of Cemetery Heights on the second day of the battle were Hoke's North Carolina and Hays' Louisiana brigades. The former was then under the command of that gallant soldier and accomplished gentleman, Colonel Isaac E. Avery, who lost his life on this occasion while gallantly leading his brigade on the heights on the 2d of July. In his report of this battle, Early says:

* * * * *

"As soon as Johnson became warmly engaged, which was a little before dusk, I ordered Hays and Avery to advance and carry the works on the heights in front. These troops advanced in gallant style to the attack, passing over the ridge in front of them under a heavy artillery fire, and there crossing a hollow between that and Cemetery Hill, and moving up this hill in the

face of at least two lines of infantry posted behind stone and plank fences, and passing over all obstacles, they reached the crest of the hill and entered the enemy's breastworks, crossing it, getting possession of one or two batteries."

Brigadier General Iverson, of Georgia, had manifested such a want of capacity in the field at Gettysburg he was relieved of his command and assigned to provost guard duty. As a further mark of Lee's appreciation of Ramseur this brigade was assigned temporarily to his command, in addition to the one he already commanded.

In the various skirmishes and battles of this campaign Ramseur displayed his usual efficiency and gallantry. After returning from Pennsylvania our troops went into winter quarters near Orange Court House, and as it was clear that after the exhaustive campaigns of the year we would enjoy a period of comparative quiet, Ramseur obtained a leave of absence for the purpose of entering into the most important relations of one's life. He had long been attached to and was then engaged to Miss Ellen E. Richmond, of Milton, but the consummation of his hopes had been often deferred by the exigencies of the public service. He was now made supremely happy in their marriage, which occurred on the 22d of October, 1863.

The successive failures of the Army of the Potomac in its engagements with the Army of Northern Virginia created a general apprehension throughout the North that unless something more satisfactory was accomplished the successful issue of the war was becoming a most doubtful problem. This prompted the nomination of General Grant to the grade of Lieutenant General and he was assigned to the command of "all the armies of the United States." One of the conditions of his acceptance was that he should not be hampered in the discharge of his duties by the central authorities at Washington—a wise and judicious precaution, which else had resulted in his supersedure after his terrible losses at Coal Harbor, where, according to Swinton, he had thirteen thousand of his men killed and wounded within the space of two hours, and this without inflicting but little loss on his adversary.

On the morning of May 5th, 1864, over one hundred thousand of Grant's troops had crossed the Rapidan, and thence followed that series of battles on the overland route to Richmond, wherein the killed, wounded and disabled on the part of Grant's army were as great as the whole army of Lee when these engagements commenced. During this march Ramseur's men were frequently engaged in successful skirmishes and battles with the enemy, but the great battle in which he shone conspicuously was on the 12th of May, at

SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE.

On the afternoon of the 11th there was severe fighting on our right, when Ramseur's men mounted over our works and drove the enemy from our front in a hand-to-hand engagement. It was expected by Lee that during the night Grant would withdraw his troops for the purpose of continuing his advance on Richmond. In order to be in readiness to confront him when he should make this change, Lee had directed that the guns in front of Ed. Johnson's Division, in a point in our lines known as the "salient," should be withdrawn during the night to facilitate our movements in the morning. This fact became known to Grant through a deserter from our lines. Hancock's Corps was in front of this point, and he was directed to approach under the cover of night and a dense fog and assault the line at early dawn. The attack resulted most successfully, for our works were captured, together with a large number of prisoners. To restore in part this line became Ramseur's duty. In his report of the action he speaks substantially as follows: That in anticipation of an attack on his front on the morning of the 12th he had his brigade under arms at early dawn. Very soon he heard a terrible assault on his right. He therefore moved Cox's Regiment, which was in reserve, to a position perpendicular to his line of battle. At this time the enemy was massing his troops for a further advance. For the purpose of driving him back he formed his brigade in a line parallel to the two lines held by the enemy. The men in charging were

directed to keep their alignment and not pause until both lines of works were ours. How gallantly and successfully these orders were executed were witnessed by Generals Rodes and Ewell. The two lines of Federal troops were driven pell-mell out and over both lines of our original works with great loss. The enemy held the breastworks on our right, enfilading the line with destructive fire, at the same time heavily assaulting our right front. In this extremity, Colonel Bennett of the Fourteenth offered to take his regiment from left to right, under a severe fire, and drive back the growing masses of the enemy on our right. This hazardous offer was accepted as a forlorn hope, and was most successfully executed. To Colonel Bennett and his men, says General Ramseur, and his gallant officers, all honor is due. I distinctly recall the circumstances under which the charge was made, and for cool audacity and unflinching courage I never saw it surpassed. At the time the movement was commenced Colonel Parker's Regiment and the Federals were engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter in and over the works, while my regiment was pouring a most destructive fire into the Federals in our front. We entered these works at 4 o'clock on the morning of the 12th and remained in the works fighting and contending for over twenty hours. When relieved, hungry and exhausted, we dropped upon the wet ground and slept most profoundly.

A correspondent of the *London Morning Herald*, who had familiar access to Lee's headquarters, in a description of the battle of the Wilderness, gives this vivid account of the action of Ramseur's Brigade on the morning of the 12th :

"The Federalists continued to hold their ground in the salient, and along the line of works, to the left of that angle, within a short distance of the position of Monaghan's (Hays') Louisianians. Ramseur's North Carolinians of Rodes' Division formed, covering Monaghan's right; and being ordered to charge, were received by the enemy with a stubborn resistance. The desperate character of the struggle along that brigade-front was told terribly in the hoarseness and rapidity of its musketry. So close was the fighting there, for a time, that the fire of friend

and foe rose up rattling in one common roar. Ramseur's North Carolinians dropped in the ranks thick and fast, but still he continued, with glorious constancy, to gain ground, foot by foot. Pressing under a fierce fire, resolutely on, on, on, the struggle was about to become one of hand to hand, when the Federalists shrank from the bloody trial. Driven back, they were not defeated. The earthworks being at the moment in their immediate rear, they bounded on the opposite side; and having thus placed them in their front, they renewed the conflict. A rush of an instant brought Ramseur's men to the side of the defenses; and though they crouched close to the slopes, under enfilade from the guns of the salient, their musketry rattled in deep and deadly fire on the enemy that stood in overwhelming numbers but a few yards from their front. Those brave North Carolinians had thus, in one of the hottest conflicts of the day, succeeded in driving the enemy from the works that had been occupied during the previous night by a brigade which, until the 12th of May, had never yet yielded to a foe—the Stonewall."

In an address before the Army of Northern Virginia, Colonel Venable, of Lee's staff, says: "The restoration of the battle on the 12th, thus rendering utterly futile the success achieved by Hancock's Corps at daybreak, was a wonderful feat of arms, in which all the troops engaged deserve the greatest credit for endurance, constancy and unflinching courage. But without unjust discrimination, we may say that Gordon, Rodes and Ramseur were the heroes of this bloody day. * * * * Rodes and Ramseur were destined, alas! in a few short months, to lay down their noble lives in the Valley of Virginia. There was no victor's chaplet more highly prized by the Roman soldier than that woven of the grass of early spring. Then let the earliest flowers of May be always intertwined in the garlands which the pious hands of our fair women shall lay on the tombs of Rodes and Ramseur, and of the gallant dead of the battle of twenty hours at Spottsylvania."

General Long, in his "Life of Lee," puts the name of Ramseur in the van of those who rushed into this angle of death and hurled back the Federals' most savage sallies. During the long and fierce struggle I saw soldiers place the arms of their comrades who had just fallen in such a position as when they had become stiffened they would hold the cartridges we were using. Yes, fighting and exhausted, amidst blood and mud and brains, they would sit on the bodies of their fallen comrades for rest, and dared not show even a finger above the breastworks, for so terrible was the fire at this angle that a tree eighteen inches in diameter was cut asunder by minnie balls. After the battle was over Generals Lee and Ewell thanked Ramseur in person, and directed him to carry to his officers and men their high appreciation of their conspicuous services and heroic daring. At this time such portions of the First and Third Regiments as were not captured in the salient were placed in the brigade, and it is sufficient praise to bear witness that from that time on to the surrender at Appomattox their officers and men always showed themselves worthy of the highest confidence reposed in them. In appreciation of the conspicuous services rendered by Ramseur on this occasion, he was made a Major General and assigned to the command of Early's Division, and I had the distinguished honor of being assigned to Ramseur's (now to become Cox's) historic brigade.

THE VALLEY OF VIRGINIA,

both physically and strategically, is one of the most attractive regions of that State. It is not less distinguished for the brilliant achievements of Stonewall Jackson than for the ardent patriotism of its men and the devotion and sacrifices of its women to the cause of the South. It was here that Jackson, with only a little army of thirteen thousand men, defeated and drove from the valley Milroy, Fremont, Banks and Shields, whose combined forces were five times as great as his own, besides capturing vast quantities of much needed commissary and ordnance stores and large numbers of prisoners. After

the battle of Coal Harbor the Second Corps, composed of Ramseur's, Rodes' and Gordon's Divisions, were placed under the command of Early, and directed to proceed to this valley, with instructions to capture or destroy the army of Hunter, a recreant Virginian, who was marching in the direction of Lynchburg, destroying the country as he moved along. Attached to this corps was Nelson's and Braxton's battalions of artillery, together with a division of cavalry. At this time Breckinridge, who, in a brilliant engagement, had recently defeated Sigel, was at Lynchburg awaiting our arrival. Our troops were transported by rail. Ramseur's and the greater part of Gordon's Divisions were sent forward as soon as they were ready. They arrived at Lynchburg at about 4 o'clock P. M., on the 17th of June. Here they united with Breckinridge and the troops of Major General Ransom, who was in command of the whole cavalry in the valley. Hunter was in camp near the city of Lynchburg. In a letter to me, General Ransom says that at this time "he (Ramseur) and I reconnoitered the left flank of Hunter's army and found it could be most advantageously assailed, and in person reported the fact to General Early, who said he would not attack until the whole of Rodes' Division had arrived from Richmond. The opportunity to destroy Hunter's army was then lost." Hunter took counsel of his fears and advantage of the cover of night and darkness to make a hasty retreat. Early on the morning of the 19th we commenced a pursuit, and just before night overtook the enemy's rear at Liberty, when Ramseur's Division moved on it and drove it through the place. It was now ascertained that Hunter had not taken the route that we anticipated, but had retreated by way of Beauford's Gap, where, the next day, he was found occupying a commanding position on the crest of the mountain. After our arrival we spent the afternoon in efforts to secure a position from which to successfully assail him the following day. Hunter, by our failure to promptly pursue at daylight, made his escape, and being in the mountains further pursuit was useless. Early, in his report, says: "By mistake of the messenger who was sent

with orders to General Rodes to lead the next morning, there was some delay in his movement on the 21st, but the pursuit was resumed very shortly after sunrise." After resting a day we resumed the march and reached Buchanan that night. Our next important move was to cross the Potomac into Maryland. We reached Frederick, Md., about the 9th of the month, when Ramseur, after a slight resistance, moved through the town and brushed away the Federals before him. Our invasion had so alarmed the Federal capital that General Wallace was directed to move at once with such forces as he had and could collect and interpose them between us and Washington. When Wallace reached our front he drew his troops up on the eastern bank of the

MONOCACY.

- Ramseur deployed in his front, drove his skirmishers across the river and a brief and brisk artillery duel followed. In the meantime McCausland, with his cavalry, crossed the river, attacked the Federal left flank and threw it into confusion, which Early discovering, threw forward Gordon's Division, commanded by Breckinridge. Gordon moved to the assistance of McCausland, while Ramseur crossed over the railroad bridge and fell upon Wallace, who retreated with great precipitation, leaving in our hands six or seven hundred prisoners besides his killed and wounded. Our loss in killed and wounded was severe, but as this was a sharp and brilliant engagement, well planned and spiritedly executed, it infused new life into our troops. On the 10th we moved to Rockville. As the weather was hot and the roads dusty, our troops were easily fatigued and made but slow progress. The next day we resumed the march, and in the afternoon reached Seventh street pike, which leads into Washington. In a history of the Army of the Potomac, Swinton, in speaking of this movement, says: "By afternoon the Confederate infantry had come up and showed a strong line in front of Fort Stevens. Early had there an opportunity to dash into the city, the works being very slightly defended. The hope at headquarters that the capital could be saved from capture was very

slender." The truth is, the Sixth and Ninth Corps of Grant's army were then *en route* to save the capital, and for us to have entered it at this time might, in the end, have proved a costly experiment. Probably more expedition might have been exercised by us in our march. After reconnoitering and skirmishing a couple of days, we turned our backs on the capital, beat a hasty retreat to the Potomac, followed by the enemy's cavalry.

The next engagement of any importance in which Ramseur was concerned was at Winchester, where he was left with his command and a battery of artillery to protect the place from a threatened attack from Averill. While here he was informed by General Vaughan, in command of the cavalry, that Averill, with a small force, was at Stephenson's Depot, and could be surprised and easily captured. Placing too much confidence in these representations, Ramseur advanced against him without the proper precaution of throwing forward a strong skirmish line, and he encountered Averill with a large force of infantry and cavalry, and met with a pretty severe repulse. In a letter to me, General W. G. Lewis, who was wounded in this engagement, says that Ramseur was not altogether responsible for the mistake that occurred, for he had every reason to suppose that the information furnished by Vaughan was correct. This matter, while not of much importance, is referred to simply because it is the only instance in which he met with a reverse. The blame properly rests upon General Vaughan, who should have been more careful in his statements.

On the 9th of September information reached us that a large force had been concentrated at Harper's Ferry, which consisted of the Sixth, Nineteenth and Crook's Corps, and was under a new commander, who proved to be Sheridan. From this time on constant maneuvering and skirmishing occurred between the two armies, in which Ramseur was more or less prominently engaged. Sheridan proved to be a wary, cautious and prudent commander. In all of these movements it appeared that his purpose was rather to ascertain the strength and character of his adversary than to engage him in battle. Early was disappointed

and disgusted by his wary methods, and says in his "Last Year of the War" that "the events of the last month had satisfied me that the commander opposing me was without enterprise and possessed an excessive caution which amounted to timidity. If it was his policy to produce the impression that his force was too weak to fight me, he did not succeed; but if it was to convince me that he was not an able and energetic commander, his strategy was a complete success, and subsequent events have not changed my opinion." Sheridan had recently been transferred from the Army of the West, where Lee's methods and "Stonewall Jackson's way" were known as towers of strength. For the first time Sheridan was given an independent command, had a wholesome dread of our veterans, and also fully realized the fact that upon the result of his first encounter with his adversary there was involved an important political as well as military element.

Grant's campaign from the Wilderness to Coal Harbor had been disappointing to the North, where there was a feeling that so far the war had been a failure, which, in commenting on, in his "Army of the Potomac," Swinton says, that when the records of the War Department shall be carefully examined they will develop discoveries of the most startling nature. In speaking of public sentiment just prior to the battle of Winchester, Grant says in his "Memoirs":

"I had reason to believe that the administration was a little afraid to have a decisive battle fought at that time, for fear it might go against us and have a bad effect on the November elections. The convention which had met and made its nomination of the Democratic candidate for the presidency had declared the war a failure.

"Treason was talked as boldly in Chicago as ever it had been at Charleston.

"It was a question of whether the government would then have had the power to make arrests and punish those who thus talked treason.

"But this decisive victory was the most effective campaign argument made in the canvass."

In addition to what Grant says, there was another motive which made Sheridan timid in encountering our forces, and possibly Grant's presence was necessary to get him up to the fighting point.

In his "Memoirs," Sheridan says:

"I had opposing me an army largely composed of troops that had operated in this region hitherto under "Stonewall" Jackson with marked success, inflicting defeat on the Union forces almost every time the two armies had come in contact.

"These men were now commanded by a veteran officer of the Confederacy, General Jubal A. Early, whose past services had so signalized his ability that General Lee specially selected him to take charge of the Valley District, and notwithstanding the misfortunes that befell him later, clung to him to the end of the war. The Confederate army at this date was about twenty thousand strong, and consisted of Early's own Corps, with Generals Rodes, Ramseur and Gordon commanding its divisions; the infantry of Breckinridge, of Southwestern Virginia; three battalions of artillery, and the cavalry brigades of Vaughan, Johnson, McCausland and Imboden."

Early had marched and countermarched so often in the presence of and around Sheridan's army without bringing him to a test of strength, he began to think him no better than Hunter, and entertained more contempt for than fear of him. He separated his divisions at will, and scattered them from Winchester to Martinsburg—twenty-two miles—with no greater motive than that of interrupting railroad traffic, producing a little diversion in Washington, and securing a few commissaries in Martinsburg. His last movement in this direction was on the eve of the

BATTLE OF WINCHESTER.

Of this movement he says that, "having been informed that a force was at work on the railroad near Martinsburg, I moved on the afternoon of the 17th of September with Rodes' and Gordon's Divisions and Braxton's artillery to Bunker Hill; and on the morning of the 18th, with Gordon's Divis-

ion and a part of the artillery, to Martinsburg, preceded by a part of Lomax's cavalry." It will thus be seen that in the presence of a largely superior force, and a new and untried commander, Early had his troops stretched out and separated like a string of glass beads with a knot between each one. In a previous move of a similar nature on Martinsburg, at Bunker Hill, I had been reliably informed that the next time Early should make the mistake of separating his command Sheridan intended to attack and endeavor to crush his troops in detail. This fact I communicated to General Rodes, who replied: "I know it. I have told Early as much"; and with much irritation of manner, said: "I can't get him to believe it."

On the morning of the 19th the booming of cannon was heard in the direction of Winchester. As skirmishing at this time was frequent, we could not positively decide as to what it portended. Rodes was now at Stephenson's Depot, Breckinridge and Gordon at Bunker Hill, and Ramseur at Winchester. Rodes received orders to "move out," but was not directed where to go. We moved out, took position behind a rock wall north of the road intersecting the Winchester road, where we anxiously awaited further orders for the space of two hours. All this time Ramseur, with his seventeen hundred men, was actively engaged with Sheridan's advance corps. Had we have been properly directed, we could have moved forward and crushed this corps before the remainder of Sheridan's troops arrived, and secured a complete victory. In speaking of the time when the firing commenced, Early, who was with Gordon, says: "I immediately ordered all the troops that were at Stephenson's Depot to be in readiness to move, directions being given by Gordon, who had arrived from Bunker Hill, to move at once, but by some mistake on the part of my staff officer, the latter order was not delivered to either Generals Breckinridge or Gordon."

Ramseur was compelled to bear the whole brunt of the attack of Sheridan's army until we came to his support, about 10 A. M. While Rodes was moving in column up the Martinsburg road, near Winchester, we were unexpectedly called to attention, faced

to the left, and moved forward to engage the enemy, who had advanced to within one hundred yards of the road. Grimes' Brigade was on the right, mine in the centre, and Cook's on the left, for Battle's was still behind. After a brief and vigorous assault the Fedrals commenced falling back.

Grimes drove him through the woods and formed on the left of Ramseur, while I was driving the Federals before me in an open field, supported by Cook on my left. The latter brigade was brought to a temporary halt. Rodes was now in my rear, and dispatched his only remaining staff officer to push forward this brigade. At this moment Lieutenant J. S. Battle of my staff came up, informed me that Colonel Bennett of the Fourteenth Regiment had just had his horse shot under him, and he had given him his. It was now that General Rodes was shot in the head by a ball, and caught by Lieutenant Battle as he fell from his horse. The fall of Rodes was not observed by the troops, who pushed on, and struck a weak line between the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps. At this point the Federals were severely punished, and fell back, leaving their killed and wounded. A large number of officers and men were secreted in a ditch, whom we captured. We pursued the enemy, with a hot fire, beyond the crest of the hill on which Grimes had established his line. Here Evans' Brigade, upon meeting a heavy fire, fell back, which exposed my brigade to a concentrated, direct and left oblique fire. Seeing that I could not maintain this advanced position, my Aide, Major Gales, was sent to General Early with a request to have a battery placed on a hill in my rear. This was promptly done, when my men fell back and were formed behind the battery, which opening with telling effect upon their heavy lines, they laid down, and the victory appeared to be ours. In this brief engagement Colonel Bannett had two horses shot from under him and was captured. Colonel Cobb of the Second lost a foot, and Colonel Thurston of the Third was severely wounded. While my loss in officers and men had been severe, my troops were in fine spirits. Here we lay until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when Major G. Peyton of the division staff directed me to fall back, for

the infantry had retired from my left, and Fitz Lee's cavalry was hotly engaged with that of the Federals. I replied that there was no occasion for my falling back, as I could repulse any assault the Federals might attempt; and upon their endeavoring to advance, I opened fire upon them and they rapidly sought shelter. Discovering (after Major Peyton retired) that the Federals were in my rear, I fell back in good order to the Martinsburg pike and formed on the left of our troops. Here we were exposed, without any protection, to a heavy artillery fire, which was inflicting unnecessary punishment upon my men. I turned to Général Breekinridge, who was near, and pointed to a line of hills and suggested that that was the place to make our stand, to which he agreed. Thereupon I faced my men about and commenced retiring deliberately to the hills, all the troops conforming to this movement. General Early, through a staff officer, directed me to return; I thereupon faced my men about and moved them to the front. Upon reaching the turnpike a second officer came from General Early and directed me to fall back. Facing my men about, I again commenced slowly retiring. While thus marching and countermarching in a murderous fire, a cannon-ball struck in the color-guard, just in the rear of my horse's tail, cut one man asunder, tore off the skull of another, which was thrown in front, and spattered blood and brains on all who were near. My veterans, instead of being stampeded, only pressed a little more impulsively upon my horse's tail.

War hath its horrors, which the selfishness and ambition of men bring upon them, and they must endure them; but the suffering and distress of females no true man can complacently witness. Such scenes of distress and heart-rending agony as were manifested by the true women of Winchester as their town was uncovered and they were thus exposed to the foe, while they cannot be described, brought tears to the eyes of stoutest men.

Our troops now retreated towards Fisher's Hill. My brigade secured the elevation which I had selected, and stood as a menace to pursuit until our army had measurably retired. Then

proceeding to the turnpike, I was retreating in column, when Dr. Hunter McGuire, who was with Early, approached and said General Early was feeling badly; that we had lost but one caisson, and he wished I would take my troops and protect from capture the artillery then passing. I informed him that I was so far from division headquarters (for our army was not then in sight) that I did not desire to have my brigade exposed to capture unless he would bring me an order from General Early, who was then riding slowly along the pike. He returned to the General and came back and said the General said he wished I would do it. I then dispatched Assistant Adjutant General Gales to General Battle, who, after the fall of Rodes, was in command of the division, with information as to where I was and what I was doing. I then turned to my command, which had been joined by other troops who had lost their commands, and directed them to deploy and advance between the enemy's cavalry and our artillery, which was done with great spirit and promptness in the presence of the General, but without a word of indorsement from him. In this manner we moved on, protecting the artillery until near dusk, when we found Ramseur with his division thrown across the turnpike to prevent pursuit. About the time the artillery and my brigade crossed his line the enemy made a spirited charge to capture the guns. Ramseur's men rose and met it with a well-directed fire, which stopped further pursuit. I moved on and soon joined our troops. So that Ramseur, upon whom the enemy had opened their battle in the morning, gave them the last repulse at night.

Of this battle, Early writing, says: "A skillful and energetic commander of the enemy's forces would have crushed Ramseur before any assistance could have reached him, and thus caused the destruction of my whole force; and later in the day, when the battle had turned against us, with the immense superiority of cavalry which Sheridan had and the advantage of the open country, would have destroyed my whole force and captured everything I had. * * * * * I have thought, instead of being promoted, Sheridan ought to have been cashiered for

this battle." In his "Memoirs," Grant says: "Sheridan moved at the time fixed upon. He met Early at the crossing of the Opequan Creek and won a most decisive victory—one which electrified the country. Early had invited this attack himself by his bad generalship, and made the victory easy." Considering the great disparity of numbers, this battle of Winchester was, after all, no great victory on the part of Sheridan, and Grant intimates as much, for his troops outnumbered those of Early more than three to one. His cavalry was in fine condition, while ours was worn down by excessive duties and scant forage. It was won at a critical moment to the Federal government, and it became to its interest to magnify it in every way practicable.

After our defeat at Winchester we fell back and formed a line of battle behind Fisher's Hill. In our encounter with Sheridan's army, notwithstanding our defeat, his loss had been severe and his pursuit was languid. It was the 20th before he reached our front, and several days were passed in manœuvering and skirmishing. Ramseur's Division occupied the left of our line of battle and the prolongation of our line was defended by cavalry. On the 22d, Sheridan threw forward Crook's Corps, pushed back our cavalry and took possession of our line. Ramseur hearing the firing to his left, withdrew my brigade from the line and ordered me to move in the direction of the firing, for after the fall of Rodes, Ramseur, to our great gratification, was placed in charge of his division. On moving to the left I had a brisk skirmish with a part of Crook's men, but did not encounter the main force. From the firing in the direction of our line it was soon apparent that our army was falling back. I now met General Lomax with a part of his men, and he kindly conducted me by the nearest route to the turnpike over which we were retreating.

It was full dusk when we reached the road. Colonel Pendleton, an admirable officer and an accomplished gentleman-of the corps staff, met me and requested that my brigade be thrown across the road to cover the retreat. The brigade was promptly formed, advanced rapidly to a fence, where it met the

enemy in a hand-to-hand encounter, repulsed them and stopped the pursuit for the night. It was while near me that Colonel Pendleton, whom I had intimately known when on Jackson's staff, fell mortally wounded.

Napoleon said: "The moral force in war is worth twice its physical effect." Unfortunately, from this time on, that moral force which leads to success in battle was, in this army, under its present leadership, sadly lacking.

A word now as to the

PRIVATE SOLDIER

of the Confederate army. The emergencies of the South called forth all of her sons to the front ("from the cradle to the grave," as Grant expressed it), and in its ranks might be found men of every position in society. From education, association and pursuits he was superior to the ordinary soldier. He fought not for pay, for glory or promotion, and received but little of either. He coveted danger, not from recklessness, but for the loved ones at home, whose approbation and safety were dearer to him than life itself. His honors and rewards were the approval of a good conscience. His humor was droll; his wit original; his spirits unflagging; his shoeless feet, tattered clothes and "hard-tack" were oftener matters for jest than complaint. When his officer was considerate and capable he was his idol. He was intelligent, understood the issues at stake and discussed the merits and conduct of every battle. Whether on the picket line or the forefront of battle, behind every trusted musket there was a thinker, and there was an accommodation and comradeship between the mere boy and the oldest veteran. It was such devotion and unsurpassed heroism as was displayed by the privates of each army, equally brave and of one nationality, that makes our country great and demonstrates to the world the excellence and superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race.

"Can comrades cease to think of those who bore
The brunt of conflict, marching side by side—
Forget how youth forgot his beardless face,
Madeauteous by his valorous arm?"

' No, never! while a widowed heart ceases to forget or a sister shall coldly touch the brother's "honored blade." All honor then to the noble women who, in his old age and poverty—that "ill-matched pair"—seek to provide, if not a home, at least a shelter for him. May Heaven's choicest blessing rest upon them and all who shall aid them in their pious and patriotic work.

To return to my narrative. After the affair of Fisher's Hill we fell back to the lower passes of the Blue Ridge, where Sheridan followed us as far as Staunton. Then, after destroying the Central Railroad, he retreated up the valley and took position behind his intrenchments at

CEDAR CREEK.

Early had now been re-inforced by the return of Kershaw's Division, Cutshaw's battalion of artillery and some cavalry, which about made up his losses at Winchester and Fisher's Hill. About the time Sheridan fell back it had been Early's purpose to attack him, which he doubtless anticipated, for he heard that Longstreet had joined Early, and it was their purpose to destroy him. Early pursued Sheridan beyond Middletown, where he found him too strongly intrenched for a direct attack, and we were therefore formed behind our breastworks at Fisher's Hill. From our signal station, which overlooked their camp, it was discovered that the Federal left flank was lightly picketed, and by a long detour and careful movement could be taken in reverse. A flanking movement was directed by Early and mainly intrusted to Gordon, who, with Ramseur's Division, commenced moving early after dark. The night was consumed in a fatiguing and exhausting march, which was conducted with the greatest secrecy. We reached the point at which we were to cross the creek and make the attack at early dawn. Here we were joined by Payne's cavalry, who at full speed dashed upon and captured Sheridan's headquarters, and, but for his absence, would have captured him. While Crook's Corps was enjoying its undisturbed quiet, and possibly dreaming of to-morrow, we descended like a wolf on the fold and

aroused them by "Rebel yells" and peals of musketry, and they hastily fled in garments more suited to a camp than a ball-room.

After our great reverses the sensation of pursuit was delightful. As Ramseur hurried from point to point to hasten forward his troops where resistance was offered his presence and manner was electrical. Notified of our attack by the firing, the Federals in other parts of the field formed and offered some resistance, but they were so much demoralized that my little brigade drove back a division ten times its number after but slight resistance. By 8 o'clock we had captured nearly all their artillery and from fifteen hundred to two thousand prisoners, and the Federals were in retreat. Early in the meantime, with two divisions which had scarcely been engaged, came upon the field. Gordon informed me that he then advised him to seize all his wagon, artillery and ambulance horses—indeed, every one he could get—mount his men upon them, and hotly pursue the Federals before they could recover from their panic. But we were very deliberate. While this was occurring Sheridan was at Winchester, on his return from Washington. He gives this graphic account of his meeting with his fleeing troops: "At Mill Creek my escort fell behind and we were going ahead at a regular pace when, just as we made the crest of the rise beyond the stream, there burst upon our view the appalling spectacle of a panic-stricken army—hundreds of slightly wounded men, throngs of others unhurt, but utterly demoralized, and baggage wagons by the score, all pressing to the rear in hopeless confusion, telling only too plainly that a disaster had occurred at the front. On accosting some of the fugitives, they assured me that the army was broken up, in full retreat, and that all was lost; all this with a manner true to that peculiar indifference that takes possession of panic-stricken men." In the meantime General Wright, with one division and some cavalry, had the only organized force in our presence. The return of Sheridan and the lack of a vigorous pursuit had the effect to allay the panic with which his army was seized early in the day. Ascertaining from some prisoners that were captured that Longstreet was not with Early, Sheridan reorgan-

ized his men the best he could and turned upon us, I should say about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Ramseur kept his men well in hand, and from behind rock walls successfully resisted the advance of the Federals. Near 4 o'clock Kershaw's Division gave way on my left. I sent my headquarter courier, private Beggarly, to report the fact to General Ramseur. While doing so his horse was shot through the ear and the horse upon which General Ramseur sat (for he refused to take shelter) was killed. At the request of General Ramseur, private Beggarly let the General have his horse. So careful was Ramseur of the rights of others, even in the midst of a severe engagement, this horse was not taken before getting my consent.

During this whole encounter no man could have behaved more magnificently and heroically than Ramseur did in his efforts to resist the overwhelming tide which was now setting in upon us. From the position which he occupied the retreat of Kershaw's Division and the overlapping flanking column of the Federals could be seen. His troops became alarmed and could not be held in position, and in a vain effort to hold them this brave and accomplished young officer fell

MORTALLY WOUNDED

and was captured. In speaking of his conduct upon this occasion, General Early says: "Major General Ramseur has often proved his courage and his capacity to command, but never did these qualities shine more conspicuous than on the afternoon of the 19th of this month, when, after two divisions on his left had given way and his own was doing the same thing, he rallied a small band and for one hour and a quarter held in check the enemy, until he was shot down himself. In endeavoring to stop those who were retiring from the field I had occasion to point them to the gallant stand made by Ramseur with his small party, and if his spirit could have animated those who left him thus battling the 19th of October would have had a far different history. He met the death of a hero, *and with his fall the last hope of saving the day*

was lost! General Ramseur was a soldier of whom his State has reason to be proud—he was brave, chivalrous and capable.” General Grimes says, in his report of this battle: “Up to the hour of 4 P. M. the troops of this division, both officers and men, with a few exceptions, behaved most admirably, and were kept well in hand. But little plundering and only a few shirking their duty. After that hour all was confusion and disorder. The brigade commanders conducted themselves, each and all, with great coolness and judgment, and are deserving of especial mention for using all possible efforts to check their troops, but without success. The death of the brave and heroic soldier, General Ramseur, is not only a loss to this division but to his State and country at large. No truer and nobler spirit has been sacrificed in this unjust and unholy war.” Colonel Winston, commanding the Forty-third and Forty-fifth North Carolina Regiments, says that “only one man of those regiments in passing through the rich spoils of the enemy’s camp fell out of ranks, and he did it to get a hat, and was court-martialed.” And so far as I observed, the charge of General Early, that the loss of the fruits of our victory in the morning was ascribable to the plundering of the soldiers, is a great injustice. Certainly it is so as applicable to that large body of North Carolinians who were then in his corps, and who upon this, as upon prior and subsequent occasions, proved themselves to be among the best soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia.

What General Lee said in his letter to General Early, dated September 22d, 1864, in regard to his strategy as a separate commander, was clear to all, and in the main led to his want of success. Lee said: * * “As far as I can judge from this distance, you have operated more with your divisions than with your constituted strength. Circumstances may have rendered it necessary, but such a course is to be avoided if possible.” When General Forrest was asked the cause of his uniform success he replied: “I get there first with the most men.” If not classic, this is at least epigrammatic.

We cheerfully accept the well merited tribute General Early pays the chivalrous and knightly Ramseur, but it is insisted he

is entitled to one still higher. Instead of fighting with a few hundred men, as Early elsewhere says, we see him, in the language of General Grimes, "holding his division well in hand," officers and men doing their duty faithfully, while the disorder and confusion in other parts of the field hastens the disaster which with troops skillfully handled should not have occurred.

It will be asked if the criticisms of Early's valley campaign are just, why did not General Lee remove him? There are several good reasons why General Lee should have been slow to pursue such a course. Early was a man of superior intelligence, he was earnest in the cause, and as a brigadier and division commander a hard fighter and successful officer. There is, however, a marked difference between a chief and subordinate commander, and Lee had never known him otherwise than as a subordinate. It is true that Lee was finally compelled to remove him, and we may presume it was his reluctance to wound that caused him to unwillingly take the step which soon became necessary. This forbearance was in keeping with Lee's general character, as known to those who served under him. It is so well expressed by Colonel W. H. Taylor of his staff, in his book entitled "Four Years with General Lee," we can but quote from him. He says:

"If it shall be the verdict of posterity that General Lee in any respect fell short of perfection as a military leader it may perhaps be claimed: First, that he was too careful of the personal feelings of his subordinate commanders, too fearful of wounding their pride, and too solicitous of their reputation. Probably it was this that caused him sometimes to continue in command those of whose personal fitness for their position he was not convinced, and often avowedly or tacitly assumed responsibility for mishaps clearly attributable to the inefficiency, neglect or carelessness of others."

Through the courtesy of the family of General Ramseur, I am placed in the possession of a personal letter from R. R. Hutchinson, of Virginia, an able and accomplished officer, who before the battle of Cedar Creek had long served as Major and Acting Adjutant General to the division. Major Hutchinson was with

General Ramseur when he received his fatal wound, was captured while endeavoring to remove him from the field, and by his bedside during his last moments.

His account of the sad occurrence on that occasion is so vivid and touching no apology is deemed due for introducing his letter, with a single omission, in this monograph :

“NEAR STRASBURG, VA., October 20, 1864.

“MRS. S. D. RAMSEUR *Milton, N. C.* :

“DEAR MADAM:—I do not know how to write to you ; how to express my deep sympathy in your grievous affliction ; but the Christian soldier who has gone before us to that other world has asked me to do it, and I must not shrink from the performance of this duty, however painful. I am writing by the side of him whose last thought was of you and his God, his country and his duty. He died this day at twenty-seven minutes past 10 o'clock A. M., and had at least the consolation of having by his side some who wore the same uniform and served in the same holy cause as himself. His last moments were peaceful, his wounds were painful, but his hope in Christ led him to endure *all* patiently. He received his mortal wound yesterday afternoon (October 19th) between the hours of 5 and 6 P. M. at the post of honor and of danger, where he always was. Our troops had fallen back a short distance but had reformed, and were stubbornly contesting a position on a hill which the enemy attacked from three sides. He exposed himself to every shot, cheering and encouraging all. I was not far from him when I saw his horse shot ; he procured another, which was shot also, and immediately after he received his fatal wound (the second), all in the space of a very few minutes. I ran over to him, got some men, and bore him to the rear, your brother joining us on the way. I then went off after an ambulance, found it, but saw on returning with it that he had been left, as I thought, in the enemy's lines. This fear was soon after dissipated, however, by seeing him on Captain Randolph's horse, the Captain running along side and supporting him. We got him

then to the ambulance I had brought up. I thought he was safe then, not knowing how dangerous was his wound, and remained with the rear guard. When I was subsequently captured by the enemy's cavalry, I was carried to General Sheridan's headquarters, and learning that General Ramseur had been captured, asked and obtained permission to remain with him. The road had been blocked up by wagons, causing a delay, that gave the enemy time to get up and take him prisoner, just south of Strasburg. Many of his former friends (West Pointers) called to see him yesterday and to-day, and offered every assistance in their power, General Sheridan among the number. He was taken to General Sheridan's headquarters and made as comfortable as circumstances would permit. Dr. James Gillespie (Cutshaw's Battalion of Artillery), a Confederate surgeon, assisted by the enemy's surgeons, attended to him and did all that could be done under the circumstances. He suffered a good deal from his wound, the ball having entered his right side, penetrating the right and left lung, and lodging near the left side. But the end was peaceful and quiet. He spoke continually of you, and sent very many messages to his family, but above all, to his wife. He told the ambulance driver to tell General Hoke that he "died a Christian and had done his duty." He told me to "give his love and send some of his hair to his darling wife"; and often wished he could "see his wife and little child before he died." He told me to tell you he had a "firm hope in Christ, and hoped to meet you hereafter." He died as became a Confederate soldier and a firm believer.

"I inclose the lock of hair he desired sent you.

"Respectfully, R. R. HUTCHINSON,
"Major and A. A. G. P. A. C. S."

IN CONCLUSION.

Ramseur in personal appearance was slight, erect, alert, earnest in speech, with dark prominent eyes and well developed forehead. He was an ideal soldier.

General Robert Ransom, in writing of his bearing in action, while they were together in the valley, says: "Ramseur com-

manded infantry and I the whole of Early's cavalry during the time I was with Early. Whenever I had opportunity to see Ramseur his conduct was marked by great energy, brilliant dash (often amounting to impetuosity) and an enthusiasm which inspired those he led."

Among the soldiers of Napoleon, Marshal Ney was known as "the bravest of the brave." When asked whether he ever felt fear in battle, he replied that he never had time. His reply might aptly be that of Ramseur. When in action his enthusiasm arose with the magnitude of the dangers that environed him. But this enthusiasm was controlled by a well-directed judgment as to the best disposition to make of his troops, and as to the weak points of his adversary. He fully realized that war meant danger, even death; that the eyes of his troops were upon him, and their greatest safety lay in marching fearlessly and promptly to the front of danger, and he never hesitated to lead them.

On the day preceding the battle of Cedar Creek, General Ramseur received intelligence of the birth of the little child mentioned in the letter of Major Hutchinson. The birth of one's first born arouses a thousand thrilling emotions in the heart of every manly bosom which can be felt but not described.

General Ramseur was a superb horseman, and on the day of the battle he appeared upon the field well mounted and dressed with an unusual care in his handsome General's uniform. He wore upon the lapel of his coat a *boutonniere*, the gift doubtless of some fair and patriotic woman in that section, bestowed in recognition of the joyous event which he had made known to her. I have already described the enthusiasm with which his presence on this occasion inspired, as he hastened from one part of the battle field to another, and an electric glow even thrilled through my impassive breast as we drove our gallant adversaries before us, they making just enough resistance to heighten the effect danger inspires. How different is the situation of man and woman under such circumstances. To man the presence of danger is all-absorbing. Woman, on the approach of an impending

battle is filled with the most anxious forebodings of danger, which are to be followed after the battle has been fought with still more wearying and anxious thoughts and sleepless nights—for her there is no rest until the list of killed and wounded is received and doubt is resolved into certainty.

No doubt amidst that day's vicissitudes Ramseur's mind was continually dwelling upon his wife and child, and pleasant thoughts of an early meeting and of additional honors that might be his, for in the course of this address it may have been observed he scarcely ever participated in an important battle that he did not win a promotion. It is wisely provided that no man can see what a day may bring forth, or certify how long he has to live. In Ramseur's case it is pleasant to feel that as a hero and a Christian he was prepared to meet his last enemy when he came. When being borne from the field his memory revisits the old homestead, and he thinks of one between whom and himself the warmest ties had always existed. There was but a month's difference in their ages. "Tell General Hoke," he says, "I did my duty and died a Christian."

"He died, but his end was fitting,
Foremost in the ranks he led,
And he marked the heights of his nation's gain,
As he lay in the harness—dead."

The Rev. E. Harding, his connexion and chaplain, in his sketch of General Ramseur, to which I am indebted in preparing this memoir, in writing of his Christian character, says: "Ramseur read his Bible a great deal, and when opportunity offered held family prayers; that he was "fond of conversing on religious subjects, and punctual in attending divine service"; that he "was a high-toned and chivalrous gentleman, a gallant soldier, an humble Christian."

His last thoughts on earth were of home and Heaven, the sweetest words in any language. He said, bear this message to my precious wife: "I die a Christian and hope to meet her in Heaven." No balm to the bruised heart could be more precious, no assurance more gratifying.

Irrespective of section, irrespective of service, the blue and the gray—Sheridan, Custer, Federal and Confederate surgeons—gather around his couch to minister to his wants and smooth his dying pillow. His soul takes its flight, and the day men called his last was his first in the Paradise of God. His body was carefully embalmed by the Federals, borne through their lines and delivered to his early and cherished friend, General Hoke. And thus was illustrated the saying that the world would remain at peace if those who made the quarrels were the only men that fought, for between the soldiers of the two armies there was no personal animosity—of one race, of one nationality, equally brave and equally sincere, they did not bring on the war, and not with their consent has its animosities been continued. Ramseur's remains were carried to his native village, and there a large concourse of his neighbors and friends assembled to express their sorrow and do honor to his memory. They accompanied his remains to their last resting-place, which is in the Episcopal church-yard, and deposited them beside those of his father and mother. Over them a loving and devoted kinsman has had erected a handsome monument, on one side of which is engraved the Confederate flag and the principal battles in which he fought, and on the other the date of his birth and of his death, with this appropriate inscription: "A Christian Soldier."



I am at me. Must

for you

I am at me. Must

for you immediately

over

I am at me



Handwritten signature, possibly "J. M. [unclear]", followed by several large, stylized, overlapping loops and flourishes.

Handwritten signature, possibly "J. M. [unclear]", followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Handwritten signature, possibly "J. M. [unclear]", followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

